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# **The Bases of Durable Peace**

**As Voiced By  
President Wilson**

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- I. **America's Purpose: International Justice and World Peace—at New York, 27 September, 1918**
- II. **Program for World Peace; the 14 Points of 8 January, 1918**
- III. **Reply to von Hertling and Czernin: the 4 Cardinal Principles of 11 February, 1918**
- IV. **Force to the Utmost; Reply to the Prussian Challenge—6 April, 1918**
- V. **The 4 War Aims; at Mt. Vernon, 4 July, 1918**

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**THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB  
OF CHICAGO  
1918**

**Resolutions Anent President Wilson's New York  
Address of 27 September, 1918, Adopted by  
the War Committee of the Union League  
Club of Chicago, October 3, 1918.**

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**R**EALIZING the scope and implications of President Wilson's statement of the war policies of the United States in his New York address of 27 September, 1918, and that no such sweeping and searching declaration of purpose in regard to the relations of nations to one another has ever before been made by the responsible head of a powerful nation in a time of world crisis and readjustment;

Recalling that many of the wars that have devastated Europe in the past have had their roots in unjust conditions created or acquiesced in by treaties of peace that ignored the rights of peoples;

Bearing in mind that this shocking war, that has finally involved the United States, has its causes in deep-seated injustice imbedded in existing European conditions and in the purpose of the Central Powers to perpetrate yet further injustice at the expense of neighboring nations assumed to be helpless;

Seeing clearly that war can no longer be easily localized in a world of closely knit international relations and that, only through the establishment of substantial justice between the peoples of the world, can we in the United States hope, henceforth, to find peace for ourselves;

And believing that the principles, so nobly conceived and so clearly set forth by the President, will, if put into effect by our Allies and ourselves, go far toward lifting from the world the nightmare of war and the social and economic burdens that it entails and will set free men's hands and minds and spirits for the nobler tasks of peace;

We, the War Committee of the Union League Club of Chicago, hereby record our whole-hearted concurrence in the President's declaration of principles, and we pledge our best endeavors to the end that, so far as lies in the will and act of the United States, peace, when attained, shall not once more involve the bartering away of the rights of peoples in the interest of dynasties or of powerful states or groups of states, but shall square with the President's solemn declaration.

Arthur Graham Reed family  
11-28-1940

# America's Purpose

The Establishment of Justice Between the Nations—  
New York Address of 27 September, 1918

**M**Y Fellow-Citizens: I am not here to promote the loan. That will be done—ably and enthusiastically done—by the hundreds of thousands of loyal and tireless men and women who have undertaken to present it to you and to our fellow-citizens throughout the country; and I have not the least doubt of their complete success; for I know their spirit and the spirit of the country. My confidence is confirmed, too, by the thoughtful and experienced co-operation of the bankers here and everywhere, who are lending their invaluable aid and guidance.

I have come, rather, to seek an opportunity to present to you some thoughts which I trust will serve to give you, in perhaps fuller measure than before, a vivid sense of the great issues involved, in order that you may appreciate and accept with added enthusiasm the grave significance of the duty of supporting the government by your men and your means to the utmost point of sacrifice and self-denial. No man or woman who has really taken in what this war means can hesitate to give to the very limit of what they have; and it is my mission here tonight to try to make it clear once more what the war really means. You will need no other stimulation or reminder of your duty.

5-19-50  
At every turn of the war we gain a fresh consciousness of what we mean to accomplish by it. When our hope and expectation are most excited we think more definitely than before of the issues that hang upon it and of the purposes which must be realized by means of it. For it has positive and well-defined purposes which we did not determine and which we cannot alter. No statesman or assembly created them; no statesman or assembly can alter them. They have arisen out of the very nature and circumstances of the war. The most that statesmen or assemblies can do is to carry

them out or be false to them. They were perhaps not clear at the outset; but they are clear now. The war has lasted more than four years and the whole world has been drawn into it.

### **Mankind's Common Will Rules.**

The common will of mankind has been substituted for the particular purpose of individual states. Individual statesmen may have started the conflict, but neither they nor their opponents can stop it as they please. It has become a peoples' war, and peoples of all sorts and races, of every degree of power and variety of fortune, are involved in its sweeping processes of change and settlement. We came into it when its character had become fully defined and it was plain that no nation could stand apart or be indifferent to its outcome. Its challenge drove to the heart of everything we cared for and lived for. The voice of the war had become clear and gripped our hearts. Our brothers from many lands, as well as our own murdered dead under the sea, were calling to us, and we responded, fiercely and of course.

The air was clear about us. We saw things in their full, convincing proportions as they were; and we have seen them with steady eyes and unchanging comprehension ever since. We accepted the issues of the war as facts, not as any group of men either here or elsewhere had defined them, and we can accept no outcome which does not squarely meet and settle them.

### **Five Issues of the War.**

Those issues are these:

**Shall the military power of any nation or group of nations be suffered to determine the fortunes of peoples over whom they have no right to rule except the right of force?**

**Shall strong nations be free to wrong weak nations and make them subject to their purpose and interest?**

**Shall peoples be ruled and dominated, even in their own internal affairs, by arbitrary and irresponsible force or by their own will and choice?**

**Shall there be a common standard of right and privilege for all peoples and nations or shall the**

**strong do as they will and the weak suffer without redress?**

**Shall the assertion of right be haphazard and by casual alliance or shall there be a common concert to oblige the observance of common rights?**

No man, no group of men, chose these to be the issues of the struggle. They are the issues of it; and they must be settled—by no arrangement or compromise or adjustment of interests, but definitely and once for all and with a full and unequivocal acceptance of the principle that the interest of the weakest is as sacred as the interest of the strongest.

### **What Permanent Peace Means.**

This is what we mean when we speak of a permanent peace, if we speak sincerely, intelligently, and with a real knowledge and comprehension of the matter we deal with.

We are all agreed that there can be no peace obtained by any kind of bargain or compromise with the governments of the Central Empires, because we have dealt with them already and have seen them deal with other governments that were parties to this struggle, at Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest. They have convinced us that they are without honor and do not intend justice. They observe no covenants, accept no principle but force and their own interest. We cannot "come to terms" with them. They have made it impossible. The German people must by this time be fully aware that we cannot accept the word of those who forced this war upon us. We do not think the same thoughts or speak the same language of agreement.

It is of capital importance that we should also be explicitly agreed that no peace shall be obtained by any kind of compromise or abatement of the principles we have avowed as the principles for which we are fighting. There should exist no doubt about that. I am, therefore, going to take the liberty of speaking with the utmost frankness about the practical implications that are involved in it.

If it be indeed and in truth the common object of the governments associated against Germany and of the nations whom they govern, as I believe it to be, to achieve by the coming settlements a secure and lasting peace, it will be necessary that all who sit down at the peace table shall come ready and willing to pay the price, the only price, that will



procure it; and ready and willing, also, to create in some virile fashion the only instrumentality by which it can be made certain that the agreements of the peace will be honored and fulfilled.

### **Impartial Justice Must Be Done.**

That price is impartial justice in every item of the settlement, no matter whose interest is crossed; and not only impartial justice, but also the satisfaction of the several peoples whose fortunes are dealt with. That indispensable instrumentality is a League of Nations formed under covenants that will be efficacious. Without such an instrumentality, by which the peace of the world can be guaranteed, peace will rest in part upon the word of outlaws, and only upon that word. For Germany will have to redeem her character, not by what happens at the peace table, but by what follows.

And, as I see it, the constitution of that League of Nations and the clear definition of its objects must be a part, is in a sense the most essential part, of the peace settlement itself. It cannot be formed now. If formed now, it would be merely a new alliance confined to the nations associated against a common enemy. It is not likely that it could be formed after the settlement. It is necessary to guarantee the peace; and the peace cannot be guaranteed as an afterthought. The reason, to speak in plain terms again, why it must be guaranteed is that there will be parties to the peace whose promises have proved untrustworthy, and means must be found in connection with the peace settlement itself to remove that source of insecurity. It would be folly to leave the guarantee to the subsequent voluntary action of the governments we have seen destroy Russia and deceive Rumania.

### **Five Particulars of Settlement.**

But these general terms do not disclose the whole matter. Some details are needed to make them sound less like a thesis and more like a practical program. These, then, are some of the particulars, and I state them with the greater confidence because I can state them authoritatively as representing this government's interpretation of its own duty with regard to peace:

**First, the impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that plays no favorites and knows no standard but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned;**

**Second, no special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all;**

**Third, there can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations;**

**Fourth, and more specifically, there can be no special, selfish economic combinations within the league and no employment of any form of economic boycott or exclusion except as the power of economic penalty by exclusion from the markets of the world may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control;**

**Fifth, all international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world.**

### **Must Exclude Special Alliances.**

Special alliances and economic rivalries and hostilities have been the prolific source in the modern world of the plans and passions that produce war. It would be an insincere as well as an insecure peace that did not exclude them in definite and binding terms.

The confidence with which I venture to speak for our people in these matters does not spring from our traditions merely and the well-known principles of international action which we have always professed and followed. In the same sentence in which I say that the United States will enter into no special arrangements or understandings with particular nations, let me say also that the United States is prepared to assume its full share of responsibility for the maintenance of the common covenants and understandings upon which peace must henceforth rest. We still read Washington's immortal warning against "entangling alliances" with

full comprehension and an answering purpose. But only special and limited alliances entangle; and we recognize and accept the duty of a new day in which we are permitted to hope for a general alliance which will avoid entanglements and clear the air of the world for common understandings and the maintenance of common rights.

I have made this analysis of the international situation which the war has created, not, of course, because I doubted whether the leaders of the great nations and peoples with whom we are associated were of the same mind and entertained a like purpose, but because the air every now and again gets darkened by mists and groundless doubtings and mischievous perversions of counsel and it is necessary once and again to sweep all the irresponsible talk about peace intrigues and weakening morale and doubtful purpose on the part of those in authority utterly, and if need be unceremoniously, aside and say things in the plainest words that can be found, even when it is only to say over again what has been said before, quite as plainly if in less unvarnished terms.

### **Responds to the Issues of War.**

As I have said, neither I nor any other man in governmental authority created or gave form to the issues of this war. I have simply responded to them with such vision as I could command. But I have responded gladly and with a resolution that has grown warmer and more confident as the issues have grown clearer and clearer. It is now plain that they are issues which no man can pervert unless it be willfully. I am bound to fight for them, and happy to fight for them as time and circumstance have revealed them to me as to all the world. Our enthusiasm for them grows more and more irresistible as they stand out in more and more vivid and unmistakable outline.

And the forces that fight for them draw into closer and closer array, organize their millions into more and more unconquerable might, as they become more and more distinct to the thought and purpose of the peoples engaged. It is the peculiarity of this great war that while statesmen have seemed to cast about for definitions of their purpose and have sometimes seemed to shift their ground and their point of view, the thought of the mass of men, whom statesmen are supposed to instruct and lead, has grown more and more

unclouded, more and more certain of what it is that they are fighting for. National purposes have fallen more and more into the background and the common purpose of enlightened mankind has taken their place. The counsels of plain men have become on all hands more simple and straightforward and more unified than the counsels of sophisticated men of affairs, who still retain the impression that they are playing a game of power and playing for high stakes. That is why I have said that this is a peoples' war, not a statesmen's. Statesmen must follow the clarified common thought or be broken.

### **Glad to State War Aims.**

I take that to be the significance of the fact that assemblies and associations of many kinds made up of plain workaday people have demanded, almost every time they came together, and are still demanding, that the leaders of their governments declare to them plainly what it is, exactly what it is, that they are seeking in this war, and what they think the items of the final settlement should be. They are not yet satisfied with what they have been told. They still seem to fear that they are getting what they ask for only in statesmen's terms—only in the terms of territorial arrangements and divisions of power, and not in terms of broad-visioned justice and mercy and peace and the satisfaction of those deep-seated longings of oppressed and distracted men and women and enslaved peoples that seem to them the only things worth fighting a war for that engulfs the world. Perhaps statesmen have not always recognized this changed aspect of the whole world of policy and action. Perhaps they have not always spoken in direct reply to the questions asked because they did not know how searching those questions were and what sort of answers they demanded.

But I, for one, am glad to attempt the answer again and again, in the hope that I may make it clearer and clearer that my one thought is to satisfy those who struggle in the ranks and are, perhaps above all others, entitled to a reply whose meaning no one can have any excuse for misunderstanding, if he understands the language in which it is spoken or can get someone to translate it correctly into his own. And I believe that the leaders of the governments with which we are associated will speak, as they have occasion, as plainly as I have tried to speak. I hope that they

will feel free to say whether they think that I am in any degree mistaken in my interpretation of the issues involved or in my purpose with regard to the means by which a satisfactory settlement of those issues may be obtained. Unity of purpose and of counsel are as imperatively necessary in this war as was unity of command in the battlefield; and with perfect unity of purpose and counsel will come assurance of complete victory. It can be had in no other way. "Peace drives" can be effectively neutralized and silenced only by showing that every victory of the nations associated against Germany brings the nations nearer the sort of peace which will bring security and reassurance to all peoples and make the recurrence of another such struggle of pitiless force and bloodshed forever impossible, and that nothing else can. Germany is constantly intimating the "terms" she will accept; and always finds that the world does not want terms. It wishes the final triumph of justice and fair dealing.

# The 14 Points

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## A Program for World Peace—Message to Congress of 8 January, 1918

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**G**ENTLEMEN of the Congress: Once more, as repeatedly before, the spokesmen of the central empires have indicated their desire to discuss the objects of the war and the possible basis of a general peace.

Parleys have been in progress at Brest-Litovsk between Russian representatives and representatives of the central powers to which the attention of all the belligerents has been invited, for the purpose of ascertaining whether it may be possible to extend these parleys into a general conference with regard to terms of peace and settlement.

The Russian representatives presented not only a perfectly definite statement of the principles upon which they would be willing to conclude peace, but also an equally definite program of the concrete application of those principles.

The representatives of the central powers, on their part, presented an outline of settlement which, if much less definite, seemed susceptible of liberal interpretation until their specific program of practical terms was added.

### **Control of Russia the German Plan.**

That program proposed no concessions at all, either to the sovereignty of Russia or to the preferences of the population with whose fortunes it dealt, but meant, in a word, that the Central Empires were to keep every foot of territory their armed forces had occupied—every province, every city, every point of vantage—as a permanent addition to their territories and their power. It is a reasonable conjecture that the general principles of settlement which they at first suggested originated with the more liberal statesmen of Germany and Austria, the men who have begun to feel the force of their own peoples' thought and purpose, while the concrete terms of actual settlement came from the military

leaders, who have no thought but to keep what they have got. The negotiations have been broken off.

The Russian representatives were sincere and in earnest. They cannot entertain such proposals of conquest and domination.

The whole incident is full of significance. It is also full of perplexity. With whom are the Russian representatives dealing? For whom are the representatives of the central empires speaking? Are they speaking for the majorities of their respective parliaments or for the minority parties, that military and imperialistic minority, which has so far dominated their whole policy and controlled the affairs of Turkey and of the Balkan states which have felt obliged to become their associates in this war?

### **Open Diplomacy Is Insisted Upon.**

The Russian representatives have insisted, very justly, very wisely, and in the true spirit of democracy, that the conferences they have been holding with the Teutonic and Turkish statesmen should be held within open, not closed, doors, and all the world has been audience as was desired. To whom have we been listening then? To those who speak the spirit and intention of the resolutions of the German reichstag on the 9th of July last, the spirit and intention of the liberal leaders and parties of Germany, or to those who resist and defy that spirit and intention and insist upon conquest and subjugation? Or are we listening in fact to both unreconciled and in open and hopeless contradiction? These are very serious and pregnant questions.

Upon the answer to them depends the peace of the world.

But whatever the results of the parleys at Brest-Litovsk, whatever the confusions of counsel and of purpose in the utterances of the spokesmen of the central empires, they have again attempted to acquaint the world with their objects in the war and have again challenged their adversaries to say what their objects are and what sort of settlement they would deem just and satisfactory.

There is no good reason why that challenge should not be responded to, and responded to with the utmost candor. We did not wait for it. Not once, but again and again we have laid our whole thought and purpose before the world, not in general terms only, but each time with sufficient

definition to make it clear what sort of definitive terms of settlement must necessarily spring out of them.

### **Allies United As to Policies.**

Within the last week Mr. Lloyd George has spoken with admirable candor and in admirable spirit for the people and government of Great Britain. There is no confusion of counsel among the adversaries of the central powers, no uncertainty of principle, no vagueness of detail.

The only secrecy of counsel, the only lack of fearless frankness, the only failure to make definite statement of the objects of the war, lies with Germany and her allies.

The issues of life and death hang upon these definitions. No statesman who has the least conception of his responsibility ought for a moment to permit himself to continue this tragical and appalling outpouring of blood and treasure unless he is sure beyond a peradventure that the objects of the vital sacrifice are part and parcel of the very life of society and that the people for whom he speaks think them right and imperative as he does.

There is, moreover, a voice calling for these definitions of principle and of purpose which is, it seems to me, more thrilling and more compelling than any of the many moving voices with which the troubled air of the world is filled. It is the voice of the Russian people. They are prostrate and all but helpless, it would seem, before the grim power of Germany, which has hitherto known no relenting and no pity.

### **Assistance for Russia Is Needed.**

Their power apparently is shattered, and yet their soul is not subservient. They will not yield either in principle or in action. The conception of what is right, of what it is humane and honorable for them to accept, has been stated with a frankness, a largeness of view, a generosity of spirit and a universal human sympathy which must challenge the admiration of every friend of mankind; and they have refused to compound their ideals or desert others that they themselves may be safe.

They call to us to say what it is that we desire, in what, if anything, our purpose and our spirit differ from theirs; and I believe that the people of the United States would wish me to respond with utter simplicity and frankness.



Whether their present leaders believe it or not, it is our heartfelt desire and hope that some way may be opened whereby we may be privileged to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace.

### **For No Secret Understandings.**

It will be our wish and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind. The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone by; so is also the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular governments and likely at some unlooked-for moment to upset the peace of the world.

It is this happy fact, now clear to the view of every public man whose thoughts do not still linger in an age that is dead and gone, which makes it possible for every nation whose purposes are consistent with justice and the peace of the world to avow now or at any other time the objects it has in view.

We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once for all against their recurrence.

What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves.

It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us.

### **The Fourteen Points of the Program.**

The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program, and that program, the only possible program, as we see it, is this:

I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international

understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

**II.** Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

**III.** The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

**IV.** Adequate guaranties given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

**V.** A free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

### **Evacuation of Russia Necessary.**

**VI.** The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest co-operation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

**VII.** Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common

with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

### **Must Free Oppressed Nationalities.**

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.\*

XI. Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guaranties of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to

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\*The tenth point was superseded by a demand for actual freedom and not mere autonomy for the oppressed nationalities of Austria in the President's reply of 19 October, 1918, to the Austrian request for an armistice. This said: "The President is, therefore, no longer at liberty to accept mere autonomy for these peoples as a basis of peace."

the ships and commerce of all nations under international guaranties.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guaranties of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

### **Stand Together to the End.**

In regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the imperialists. We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end.

For such arrangements and covenants we are willing to fight and to continue to fight until they are achieved; but only because we wish the right to prevail and desire a just and stable peace, such as can be secured only by removing the chief provocations to war, which this program does remove.

We have no jealousy of German greatness and there is nothing in this program that impairs it. We grudge her no achievement or distinction of learning or of pacific enterprise such as have made her record very bright and very enviable.

We do not wish to injure her or to block in any way her legitimate influence or power. We do not wish to fight her either with arms or with hostile arrangements of trade, if she is willing to associate herself with us and the other peace-loving nations of the world in covenants of justice and law and fair dealing.

We wish her only to accept a place of equality among the peoples of the world—the new world in which we now live—instead of a place of mastery.

## **No Trafficking With Militarism.**

Neither do we presume to suggest to her any alteration or modification of her institutions. But it is necessary, we must frankly say and necessary as a preliminary to any intelligent dealings with her on our part, that we should know whom her spokesmen speak for when they speak to us, whether for the Reichstag majority or for the military party, and the men whose creed is imperial domination.

We have spoken now, surely, in terms too concrete to admit of any further doubt or question. An evident principle runs through the whole program I have outlined.

It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak. Unless this principle be made its foundation no part of the structure of international justice can stand. The people of the United States could act upon no other principle, and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor and everything that they possess.

The moral climax of this, the culminating and final war for human liberty has come, and they are ready to put their strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion to the test.

# The Four Cardinal Principles

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Reply to Chancellor von Hertling and Count Czernin  
—Address to Congress of 11 February, 1918

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**O**N the 8th of January, I had the honor of addressing you on the objects of the war as our people conceive them. The prime minister of Great Britain had spoken in similar terms on the 5th of January.

To these addresses, the German chancellor replied on the 24th, and Count Czernin for Austria on the same day. It is gratifying to have our desire so promptly realized that all exchanges of view on this great matter should be made in the hearing of all the world.

Count Czernin's reply, which is directed chiefly to my own address, on the 8th of January, is uttered in a very friendly tone. He finds, in my statement, a sufficiently encouraging approach to the views of his own government to justify him in believing that it furnishes a basis for a more detailed discussion of purposes by the two governments.

He is represented to have intimated that the views he was expressing had been communicated to me before hand and that I was aware of them at the time he was uttering them; but in this I am sure he was misunderstood. I had received no intimation of what he intended to say. There was, of course, no reason why he should communicate privately with me. I am quite content to be one of his public audience.

Count von Hertling's reply is, I must say, very vague and very confusing. It is full of equivocal phrases and leads it is not clear where. But it is certainly in a very different tone from that of Count Czernin and apparently of an opposite purpose. It confirms, I am sorry to say, rather than removes, the unfortunate impression made by what we had learned of the conferences at Brest-Litovsk.

## **Jealous of International Action.**

His discussion and acceptance of our general principles lead him to no practical conclusions. He refuses to apply

them to the substantive items which must constitute the body of any final settlement. He is jealous of international action and of international counsel.

He accepts, he says, the principle of public diplomacy, but he appears to insist that it be confined, at any rate in this case, to generalities and that the several particular questions of territory and sovereignty, the several questions upon whose settlement must depend the acceptance of peace by the twenty-three states now engaged in the war, must be discussed and settled, not in general council, but severally by the nations most immediately concerned by interest or neighborhood.

He agrees that the seas should be free, but looks askance at any limitation to that freedom by international action in the interest of the common order. He would, without reserve, be glad to see economic barriers removed between nation and nation, for that could in no way impede the ambitions of the military party with whom he seems constrained to keep on terms.

Neither does he raise objection to a limitation of armaments. That matter will be settled of itself, he thinks, by the economic conditions which must follow the war.

### **Hertling's Terms Then Harsh.**

But the German colonies, he demands, must be returned without debate. He will discuss with no one but the representatives of Russia what dispositions shall be made of the peoples and the lands of the Baltic provinces; with no one but the government of France the "conditions" under which French territory shall be evacuated, and only with Austria what shall be done with Poland.

In the determination of all questions affecting the Balkan states he defers, as I understand him, to Austria and Turkey; and with regard to the agreements to be entered into concerning the non-Turkish peoples of the present Ottoman empire to the Turkish authorities themselves.

After a settlement all around, effected in this fashion, by individual barter and concession, he would have no objection, if I correctly interpret his statement, to a league of nations which would undertake to hold the new balance of power steady against external disturbances.

It must be evident to every one who understands what this war has wrought in the opinion and temper of the world

that no general peace, no peace worth the infinite sacrifices of these years of tragical suffering, can possibly be arrived at in any such fashion.

### **Peace of the World Now at Stake.**

The method the German chancellor proposes is the method of the congress of Vienna. We cannot and will not return to that. What is at stake now is the peace of the world. What we are striving for is a new international order based upon broad and universal principles of right and justice—no mere peace of shreds and patches.

Is it possible that Count von Hertling does not see that, does not grasp it, is, in fact, living in his thought in a world dead and gone? Has he utterly forgotten the reichstag resolutions of the 19th of July, or does he deliberately ignore them? They spoke of the conditions of a general peace, not of national aggrandizement or of arrangements between state and state.

The peace of the world depends upon the just settlement of each of the several problems to which I adverted in my recent address to the congress. I, of course, do not mean that the peace of the world depends upon the acceptance of any particular set of suggestions as to the way in which those problems are to be dealt with. I mean only that those problems each and all affect the whole world; that unless they are dealt with in a spirit of unselfish and unbiased justice, with a view to the wishes, the natural connections, the racial aspirations, the security and peace of mind of the peoples involved, no permanent peace will have been attained.

### **Must Settle All Questions Right.**

They cannot be discussed separately or in corners. None of them constitutes a private or separate interest from which the opinion of the world may be shut out. Whatever affects the peace affects mankind, and nothing settled by military force, if settled wrong, is settled at all. It will presently have to be reopened.

Is Count von Hertling not aware that he is speaking in the court of mankind; that all the awakened nations of the world now sit in judgment on what every public man, of whatever nation may say on the issues of a conflict which has spread to every region of the world?



The reichstag resolutions of July themselves, frankly accepted the decisions of that court. There shall be no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages. Peoples are not to be handed about from one sovereignty to another by an international conference or an understanding between rivals and antagonists.

National aspirations must be respected, peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. "Self-determination" is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril.

We cannot have general peace for the asking, or by the mere arrangements of a peace conference. It cannot be pieced together out of individual understandings between powerful states. All the parties to this war must join in the settlement of every issue anywhere involved in it because what we are seeking is a peace that we can all unite to guarantee and maintain and every item of it must be submitted to the common judgment whether it be right and fair, an act of justice, rather than a bargain between sovereigns.

### **America Not Seeking to Interfere.**

The United States has no desire to interfere in European affairs or to act as arbiter in European territorial disputes. She would disdain to take advantage of any internal weakness or disorder to impose her own will upon another people. She is quite ready to be shown that the settlements she has suggested are not the best or the most enduring. They are only her own provisional sketch of principles, and of the way in which they should be applied.

But she entered this war because she was made a partner, whether she would or not, in the sufferings and indignities inflicted by the military masters of Germany against the peace and security of mankind; and the conditions of peace will touch her as nearly as they will touch any other nation to which is intrusted a leading part in the maintenance of civilization.

She cannot see her way to peace until the causes of this war are removed, its renewal rendered as nearly as may be impossible.

This war had its roots in the disregard of the rights of small nations and of nationalities which lacked the union and the force to make good their claim to determine their

own allegiances and their own forms of political life. Covenants must now be entered into which will render such things impossible for the future; and those covenants must be backed by the united force of all the nations that love justice and are willing to maintain it at any cost.

If territorial settlements and the political relations of great populations which have not the organized power to resist are to be determined by the contracts of the powerful governments, which consider themselves most directly affected, as Count von Hertling proposes, why may not economic questions also?

### **Justice the Concern of All.**

It has come about in the altered world in which we now find ourselves that justice and the rights of peoples affect the whole field of international dealing as much as access to raw materials and fair and equal conditions of trade.

Count von Hertling wants the essential bases of commercial and industrial life to be safeguarded by common agreement and guarantee, but he cannot expect that to be conceded him if the other matters to be determined by the articles of peace are not handled in the same way as items in the final accounting. He cannot ask the benefit of common agreement in the one field without according it in the other.

I take it for granted that he sees that separate and selfish compacts with regard to trade and the essential materials of manufacture would afford no foundation for peace. Neither, he may rest assured, will separate and selfish compacts with regard to provinces and peoples.

Count Czernin seems to see the fundamental elements of peace with clear eyes and does not seek to obscure them. He sees that an independent Poland, made up of all the indisputably Polish peoples who lie contiguous to one another, is a matter of European concern and must, of course, be conceded; that Belgium must be evacuated and restored, no matter what sacrifices and concessions that may involve and that national aspirations must be satisfied, even within his own empire, in the common interest of Europe and mankind.

If he is silent about questions which touch the interest and purpose of his allies more nearly than they touch those of Austria only, it must, of course, be because he feels constrained, I suppose, to defer to Germany and Turkey in the circumstances.

Seeing and conceding, as he does, the essential principles involved and the necessity of candidly applying them, he naturally feels that Austria can respond to the purpose of peace as expressed by the United States with less embarrassment than could Germany. He probably would have gone much further had it not been for the embarrassment of Austria's alliances and of her dependence upon Germany.

### **The Four Cardinal Principles.**

After all, the test of whether it is possible for either government to go any further in this comparison of views is simple and obvious. The principles to be applied are these:

**I. That each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular cause and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent.**

**II. That peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power; but that—**

**III. Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims among rival states; and—**

**IV. That all well defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world.**

A general peace erected on such foundations can be discussed. Until such a peace can be secured we have no choice but to go on. So far as we can judge, these principles that we regard as fundamental are already everywhere accepted as imperative, except among the spokesmen of the military and annexationist party in Germany. If they have anywhere else been rejected the objectors have not been sufficiently numerous or influential to make their voices audible.

The tragical circumstance is that this one party in Germany is apparently willing and able to send millions of

men to their death to prevent what all the world now sees to be just.

I would not be a true spokesman of the people of the United States if I did not say once more that we entered this war upon no small occasion and that we never can turn back from a course chosen upon principle.

### **To Use America's Full Force.**

Our resources are in part mobilized now and we shall not pause until they are mobilized in their entirety. Our armies are rapidly going to the fighting front and will go more and more rapidly. Our whole strength will be put into this war of emancipation—emancipation from the threat and attempted mastery of selfish groups of autocratic rulers—whatever the difficulties and present partial delays.

We are indomitable in our power of independent action and can in no circumstances consent to live in a world governed by intrigue and force. We believe that our own desire for a new international order under which reason and justice and the common interests of mankind shall prevail is the desire of enlightened men everywhere. Without that new order the world will be without peace and human life will lack tolerable conditions of existence and development. Having set our hand to the task of achieving it we shall not turn back.

I hope that it is not necessary for me to add that no word of what I have said is intended as a threat. That is not the temper of our people. I have spoken thus only that the whole world may know the true spirit of America—that men everywhere may know that our passion for justice and for self-government is no mere passion of words, but a passion which, once set in action, must be satisfied. The power of the United States is a menace to no nation or people.

It will never be used in aggression or for the aggrandizement of any selfish interest of our own. It springs out of freedom and is for the service of freedom.

# Force to the Utmost

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## The Acceptance of the Challenge of Prussianism in the Liberty Day Address at Baltimore, 6 April, 1918

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**F**ELLOW Citizens: This is the anniversary of our acceptance of Germany's challenge to fight for our right to live and be free, and for the sacred rights of free men everywhere.

The nation is awake. There is no need to call to it. We know what the war must cost, our utmost sacrifice, the lives of our fittest men, and, if need be, all that we possess. The loan we are met to discuss is one of the least parts of what we are called upon to give and to do, though in itself imperative.

The people of the whole country are alive to the necessity of it and are ready to offer to the utmost, even where it involves a sharp skimping and daily sacrifice to lend out of meager earnings. They will look with reprobation and contempt upon those who can and will not, upon those who demand a higher rate of interest, upon those who think of it as a mere commercial transaction.

I have not come, therefore, to urge the loan. I have come only to give you, if I can, a more vivid conception of what it is for.

### Issues of the War Now Clear.

The reasons for this great war, the reason why it had to come, the need to fight it through, and the issues that hang upon its outcome are more clearly disclosed now than ever before. It is easy to see just what this particular loan means because the cause we are fighting for stands more sharply revealed than at any previous crisis of the momentous struggle.

The man who knows least can now see plainly how the cause of justice stands and what the imperishable thing is he is asked to invest in. Men in America may be more sure

than they ever were before that the cause is their own and that, if it should be lost, their own great nation's place and mission in the world would be lost with it.

I call you to witness, my fellow countrymen, that at no stage of this terrible business have I judged the purposes of Germany intemperately. I should be ashamed in the presence of affairs so grave, so fraught with the destinies of mankind throughout all the world, to speak with truculence, to use the weak language of hatred or vindictive purpose.

We must judge as we would be judged. I have sought to learn the objects Germany has in this war from the mouths of her own spokesmen, and to deal as frankly with them as I wished them to deal with me. I have laid bare our own ideals, our own purposes, without reserve or doubtful phrase, and have asked them to say as plainly what it is that they seek.

### **Final Justice the Only Aim.**

We have ourselves proposed no injustice, no aggression. We are ready, whenever the final reckoning is made, to be just to the German people, deal fairly with the German power, as with all others. There can be no difference between peoples in the final judgment if it is indeed to be a righteous judgment.

To propose anything but justice, even-handed and dispassionate justice, to Germany at any time, whatever the outcome of the war, would be to renounce and dishonor our own cause. For we ask nothing that we are not willing to accord.

It has been with this thought that I have sought to learn from those who spoke for Germany whether it was justice or dominion and the execution of their own will upon the other nations of the world that the German leaders were seeking. They have answered, answered in unmistakable terms. They have avowed that it was not justice, but dominion and the unhindered execution of their own will.

The avowal has not come from Germany's statesmen. It has come from her military leaders, who are her real rulers. Her statesmen have said that they wished peace, and were ready to discuss its terms whenever their opponents were willing to sit down at the conference table with them.

Her present chancellor has said—in indefinite and uncertain terms, indeed, and in phrases that often seem to

deny their own meaning, but with as much plainness as he thought prudent—that he believed that peace should be based upon the principles which we had declared would be our own in the final settlement.

### **Recalls Brest-Litovsk Perfidy.**

At Brest-Litovsk her civilian delegates spoke in similar terms; professed their desire to conclude a fair peace and accord to the peoples with whose fortunes they were dealing the right to choose their own allegiances.

But action accompanied and followed the profession. Their military masters, the men who act for Germany and exhibit her purpose in execution, proclaimed a very different conclusion.

We cannot mistake what they have done—in Russia, in Finland, in the Ukraine, in Rumania.

The real test of their justice and fair play has come. From this we may judge the rest. They are enjoying in Russia a cheap triumph in which no brave or gallant nation can long take pride.

A great people, helpless by their own act, lies for the time at their mercy. Their fair professions are forgotten. They nowhere set up justice, but everywhere impose their power and exploit everything for their own use and aggrandizement, and the peoples of conquered provinces are invited to be free under their dominion!

Are we not justified in believing that they would do the same things at their western front if they were not there face to face with armies whom even their countless divisions cannot overcome? If when they have felt their check to be final they should propose favorable and equitable terms with regard to Belgium and France and Italy could they blame us if we concluded that they do so only to assure themselves of a free hand in Russia and the east?

### **Germans Planned World Empire.**

Their purpose is undoubtedly to make all the free and ambitious nations of the Baltic peninsula, all the lands that Turkey has dominated and misruled, subject to their will and ambition and build upon that dominion an empire of force upon which they fancy that they can then erect an empire of gain and commercial supremacy, an empire as

hostile to the Americas as to the Europe which it will overawe, an empire which will ultimately master Persia, India, and the peoples of the far east.

In such a program our ideals, the ideals of justice and humanity and liberty, the principle of the free self-determination of nations upon which all the modern world insists, can play no part.

They are rejected for the ideals of power, for the principle that the strong must rule the weak, that trade must follow the flag, whether those to whom it is taken welcome it or not, that the peoples of the world are to be made subject to the patronage and overlordship of those who have the power to enforce it.

### **Peril to America in the Program.**

That program once carried out, America and all who care or dare to stand with her must arm and prepare themselves to contest the mastery of the world, a mastery in which the rights of common men, the rights of women and of all who are weak, must for the time being be trodden under foot and disregarded, and the old, age-long struggle for freedom and right must begin again at its beginning. Everything that America has lived for, and loved, and grown great to vindicate and bring to a glorious realization will have fallen in utter ruin, and the gates of mercy will once more pitilessly shut upon mankind!

The thing is preposterous and impossible, and yet is not that what the whole course and action of the German armies has meant wherever they have moved?

I do not wish, even in this moment of utter disillusionment, to judge harshly or unrighteously. I judge only what the German arms have accomplished with unpitying thoroughness throughout every fair region they have touched. What, then, are we to do?

For myself, I am ready, ready still, ready even now, to discuss a fair and just and honest peace at any time that it is sincerely purposed—a peace in which the strong and the weak shall fare alike. But the answer, when I proposed such a peace, came from the German commanders in Russia, and I cannot mistake the meaning of the answer.

### **Accepts the Challenge of Force.**

I accept the challenge. I know that you accept it. All the world shall know that you accept it. It shall appear in



the utter sacrifice and self-forgetfulness with which we shall give all that we love and all that we have to redeem the world and make it fit for free men like ourselves to live in.

This now is the meaning of all that we do. Let everything that we say, my fellow countrymen, everything that we henceforth plan and accomplish, ring true to this response till the majesty and might of our concerted power shall fill the thought and utterly defeat the force of those who flout and misprize what we honor and hold dear.

Germany has once more said that force, and force alone, shall decide whether justice and peace shall reign in the affairs of men; whether right, as America conceives it, or dominion, as she conceives it, shall determine the destinies of mankind.

**There is, therefore, but one response possible from us—force; force to the utmost, force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant force which shall make right the law of the world and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust.**

# No Half-Way Peace

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Four Ends for Which the World Is Fighting—  
Mt. Vernon Address of 4 July, 1918

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**G**ENTLEMEN of the Diplomatic Corps and My Fellow Citizens: I am happy to draw apart with you to this quiet place of old counsel in order to speak a little of the meaning of this day of our nation's independence. The place seems very still and remote. It is as serene and untouched by the hurry of the world as it was in those great days long ago when Gen. Washington was here and held leisurely conference with the men who were to be associated with him in the creation of a nation.

From these gentle slopes they looked out upon the world and saw it whole, saw it with the light of the future upon it, saw it with modern eyes that turned away from a past which men of liberated spirits could no longer endure.

It is for that reason that we cannot feel, even here, in the immediate presence of this sacred tomb, that this is a place of death. It was a place of achievement. A great promise that was meant for all mankind was here given plan and reality.

The associations by which we are here surrounded are the inspiring associations of that noble death which is only a glorious consummation. From this green hillside we also ought to be able to see with comprehending eyes the world that lies about us and should conceive anew the purposes that must set men free.

## **Speaking for All Mankind.**

It is significant—significant of their own character and purpose and of the influences they were setting afoot—that Washington and his associates, like the barons at Runnymede, spoke and acted not for a class, but for a people. It has been left for us to see to it that it shall be understood that they spoke and acted not for a single people only, but for all mankind.

They were thinking not of themselves and of the material interests which centered in the little groups of landholders and merchants and men of affairs with whom they were accustomed to act, in Virginia and the colonies to the north and south of her, but of a people which wished to be done with classes and special interests and the authority of men whom they had not themselves chosen to rule over them.

They entertained no private purpose, desired no peculiar privilege. They were consciously planning that men of every class should be free and America a place to which men out of every nation might resort who wished to share with them the rights and privileges of free men.

And we take our cue from them—do we not? We intend what they intended. We here in America believe our participation in this present war to be only the fruitage of what they planted.

### **Liberty For the World Is Aim.**

Our case differs from theirs only in this, that it is our inestimable privilege to concert with men out of every nation what shall make not only the liberties of America secure, but the liberties of every other people as well. We are happy in the thought that we are permitted to do what they would have done had they been in our place.

There must now be settled once for all what was settled for America in the great age upon whose inspiration we draw today. This is surely a fitting place from which calmly to look out upon our task, that we may fortify our spirits for its accomplishment. And this is the appropriate place from which to avow, alike to the friends who look on and to the friends with whom we have the happiness to be associated in action, the faith and purpose with which we act.

### **Justice for Helpless Peoples.**

This, then, is our conception of the great struggle in which we are engaged. The plot is written plain upon every scene and every act of the supreme tragedy. On the one hand stand the peoples of the world—not only the peoples actually engaged, but many others also who suffer under mastery but cannot act; peoples of many races and in every part of the world—the people of stricken Russia still, among

the rest, though they are for the moment unorganized and helpless.

Opposed to them, masters of many armies, stand an isolated, friendless group of governments who speak no common purpose, but only selfish ambitions of their own by which none can profit but themselves, and whose peoples are fuel in their hands; governments which fear their people and yet are for the time their sovereign lords, making every choice for them and disposing of their lives and fortunes as they will, as well as of the lives and fortunes of every people who fall under their power—governments clothed with the strange trappings and the primitive authority of an age that is altogether alien and hostile to our own.

The Past and the Present are in deadly grapple, and the peoples of the world are being done to death between them.

### **What the People Fight For.**

There can be but one issue. The settlement must be final. There can be no compromise. No half-way decision would be tolerable. No half-way decision is conceivable. These are the ends for which the associated peoples of the world are fighting and which must be conceded them before there can be peace:

**I. The destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world; or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at the least its reduction to virtual impotence.**

**II. The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.**

**III. The consent of all nations to be governed in their conduct towards each other by the same principles of honor and of respect for the common law of civilized society that govern the individual citizens of all modern states in their relations with one another; to the end that all promises and cove-**

